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between the human and divine, and the more humane and sympathetic tone of thought have all tended to the recognition of God as the universal Father. This new impulse has had its dangers. A sentimentalism in all the concerns of life has invaded theology, and has introduced elements of moral weakness by obscuring God's sovereignty and the righteous ends which he seeks and demands in the life of men.

The whole book gives the feeling that the author writes from the deepest conviction, and is profoundly impressed by the far-reaching and fundamental importance of the doctrine he supports and elaborates. He makes no attempt at rhetorical effect, and if he uses arguments which, in some cases, seem defective, it is because he is unaware of the fact. The treatise may well be studied as a very important contribution to the discussion of a most vital subject.

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THE SYRIAC VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

IN all the discussions which have been raised about the comparative value of the various texts of the Greek New Testament, and especially of the Greek gospels, the value of the Peshitto version has taken a prominent place. Some of the opposers of what Mr. Gwilliam¹ tells us we must call the *Traditional Text*, and not the *Textus Receptus*, went so far as to describe it as the "sheet-anchor" of the defenders of that text. This moves Mr. Gwilliam to wrath as a wrong description of the position taken up. He would only place it among a number of other witnesses and would say that, if that witness were withdrawn from testifying to his case, he has others as good, and "primary witnesses" in the MSS. which are still better. But none the less, the appearance of Mr. Burkitt's treatise on S. Ephraim's quotations from the gospels, published in the Cambridge "Texts and Studies" late in 1901, has led him to discuss the views set forth in that work and to consider what effect Mr. Burkitt's theory would have upon his own general position. We are inclined to think that, though he holds himself in suspense on this matter, and formulates certain objections which do not seem to amount to much, Mr. Gwilliam really inclines toward the acceptance of Mr. Burkitt's theory.

¹*Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica*. Vol. V, Part III : "Place of the Peshitto Version in the Apparatus Criticus of the Greek New Testament." By G. H. GWILLIAM. Oxford : Clarendon Press

The whole question in fact turns upon the date of the Peshitto version. It was long held that S. Ephraim, when he quoted the gospels, quoted the Peshitto version. But this is certainly a mistake, if we sift out the genuine works of S. Ephraim from others which have been attributed to him. If this be done, Mr. Burkitt assures us that there is really nothing to suggest the actual use of this version. Further, we have direct evidence that this version was later than S. Ephraim. It is ascribed to one Rabbula, appointed bishop of Edessa 411 A. D. Of him it is said by his biographer that "he translated by the wisdom of God that was in him the New Testament from Greek into Syriac, because of its variations, exactly as it was."² With this direct statement before us, it is scarcely possible to date this version any earlier. Rabbula probably based his version upon the *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe*, commonly known as the Curetonian version from its discoverer. Whether S. Ephraim used this version or the Syriac Diatessaron is not clear. Mr. Burkitt thinks it was the latter.

But we are traveling away from Mr. Gwilliam's essay. One point against the attribution to Rabbula is that not more is made of it, and that such an event is unnoticed except in this one passage. But other notable events in the history of the Bible and its versions have not met even with such notice as this. Where can we find any account of the fixing of the canon of the Old Testament in the Jewish Church? What record is there of the introduction of the vocalization of the Hebrew text? The date of Rabbula stands somewhere, perhaps midway, between these two important events; why should we expect great attention to be turned toward it, especially if the version was only of the nature of a revision of a pre-existent version? We cannot grant to Mr. Gwilliam his second point, as stated in his synopsis—the disappearance of the pre-Peshitto text. Most people would say that it has not disappeared. His third objection is the universal or almost universal acceptance of the Peshitto version in the fifth century. But this is surely not difficult to account for, if Rabbula's was a commanding personality, not only in his own diocese, but in the whole Syrian church, and this seems to have been the case. The following is the description given of him in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography* (Vol. IV, p. 532a): "His episcopate was a powerful one, characterized by great activity and zeal, which was not always exhibited in a gentle

²OVERBECK, p. 172; see BURKITT, p. 57. It is curious that VENABLES in his article on Rabbula in SMITH'S *Dictionary of Christian Biography* does not mention this work of translation, though he refers to Overbeck.

or conciliatory manner. His temper was fiery, and Ivas does not scruple to call him the tyrant of his city, who lorded it over all, and violently persecuted those who opposed his imperious will." He "became the leading prelate of the oriental church," and is described as "the common master of Syria, Armenia, Persia, nay of the whole world."

We therefore consider that Mr. Burkitt has practically made out his case for the date and source of the Peshitto. It still remains for us to remember, as Mr. Gwilliam reminds us, that the version represents a Greek text which is not identical with any now extant. This he shows at considerable length. Whether Rabbula, considering the age in which he lived, would have any great powers of discrimination as to the critical value of any copies of the gospels set before him may well be doubted. The value of that text can be settled only by a minute examination of the Peshitto, and, when that has been made, we suspect that scholars will still continue to hold different opinions, according to their preconceived notions of what the purest text of the gospels was like. Mr. Gwilliam's essay will have its place in that discussion, and will well repay examination.

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THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

SINCE Gibbon wrote his famous fifteenth chapter, every historian of pre-Constantine Christianity has felt constrained to give some attention to the causes of the early progress of that religion. Most writers, if more orthodox than Gibbon, have been quite as superficial. Many valuable monographs and brief studies have indeed been written, and a great mass of fact has gradually accumulated, but there was needed learning and industry and insight like Harnack's to organize this knowledge and make it available. None of that accomplished scholar's books so displays his best qualities at their best as this history of early Christian missions.¹

There is nothing especially original or striking in the author's formal treatment of his material; he gives us the familiar German division of his subject into four general sections, or "books." The first of these is introductory, and includes a discussion of what is called by many writers "the preparation for the gospel"—taking up such

¹ *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christenthums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten.*
Von ADOLPH HARNACK. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902. xii+561 pages.